

FIRST PARISH OF WESTWOOD, UCC

Growing Faith + Sharing Love + Grounding Lives



February 11, 2021

This Sunday, February 14

God has many ways of asking, “*Can you hear me now?*” This Sunday, February 7, we will hear Mark’s account of the transfiguration of Jesus. As the disciples see Jesus in dazzling glory standing with Moses and Elijah, a voice from heaven instructs them: “*This is my child, my beloved. Listen to him.*”

What did he say that we should have heard? The reason we read this story is that we are preparing to enter the season of Lent and explore anew Jesus’ call to follow and take up our cross. Jesus has just announced that he must suffer, die and be resurrected. Peter has challenged him. Thus, the voice from heaven is affirming with Jesus that the way is through the cross.

Now we, with Jesus, turn our face towards Jerusalem and the cross. But the story doesn’t end with the cross. This is also our invitation to trust in the promise of resurrection and new life.

You will find our worship service on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/First-Parish-of-Westwood-120302557982716>. **Jesse Aguilar**, assisted by **Fina**, will ring the



hour, **Mary Masi-Phelps** will read the Gospel lesson, **Sarah Tocco** will offer music and **Thomasine Berg** will play the flute. While on Facebook, please "share" the church's post on your Facebook page.

Grace and peace,
Jill & Richard

In Our Thoughts and Prayers



Please keep Sheldon Blaney in your thoughts and prayers. Sheldon is recovering at home after hip surgery on Monday.

THE BLACK CHURCH

THIS IS OUR STORY
THIS IS OUR SONG

*New Documentary Series from
Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.*

**February 16 and February 17
9 p.m.**
(check local PBS listings)

*Two-part series reveals the broad history
and culture of the Black church and explores
African American faith communities on the
frontlines of hope and change*

This moving four-hour, two-part series from executive producer, host and writer Henry Louis Gates, Jr., the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor at Harvard University and director of the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research, traces the 400-year-old story of the Black church in America, all the way down to its bedrock role as the site of African American survival and grace, organizing and resilience, thriving and testifying, autonomy and freedom, solidarity and speaking truth to power. The documentary reveals how Black people have worshipped and, through their spiritual journeys, improvised ways to bring their faith traditions from Africa to the New World, while translating them into a form of Christianity that was not only truly their own, but a redemptive force for a nation whose original sin was found in their ancestors' enslavement across the Middle Passage.

POST-EVENT Conversation with CITY MISSION, February 25, 7pm

Register at <https://citymissionboston.org/>

City Mission Boston and Old South Church invite you to join in a virtual panel discussion and conversation about the history of the Black Church in America. This discussion will follow the PBS Series, **The Black Church: This Is Our Story, This Is Our Song** from executive producer, host and writer Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. The panel and discussion will be led by The Rev. Inez Dover, Minister of Worship and Arts at the Historic Myrtle Baptist Church in Newton and Vice President of the City Mission Board of Directors. The panelists include:

Rev. Darrell Goodwin, Executive Conference Minister, SNEUCC

Rev. Alicia Marie Johnson, Asst. Pastor of the Historic Myrtle Baptist Church of West Newton **Rev. Mariama White-Hammond**, Founding Pastor, New Roots

The event is free and will take place on **Thursday, February 25th from 7pm – 8:30pm**. Registration is required. A link to the event will be provided in the registration confirmation email.

Ash Wednesday Service



ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE Wednesday, Feb 17

<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnEpiWestwood>

Our journey towards Easter 2021 begins on February 17, Ash Wednesday. Held in tension with Easter's promise of new life, the observance of Ash Wednesday is a deep confession of all that may thwart the new life that awaits and a reminder of our vulnerability as humans: our mortality.

Keeping with tradition, First Parish of Westwood will celebrate Ash Wednesday with our neighbors: St. John's Episcopal Church and First Baptist Church. The service will be hosted by St. John's Episcopal Church, we will be using the liturgy from the Book of Common Prayer.

The service will be virtual. It will be live at 9am in the morning and then available any time after that on the Facebook site of St. John's Episcopal Church (<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnEpiWestwood>). We will be invited to place ashes on ourselves at home.

Rev. Jennifer Phillips has offered these suggestions for having ashes available at your home:

At home before the service, you are invited to write sins or regrets on pieces of paper and safely burn these in a fireproof container. If this is not possible, the black from a burned candle wick may be used, or even some soil from the ground. Place a small dish with the ash on a table near you for use during the service. As the prayer of blessing is said by an officiant, hold the dish in your palm. Only a small quantity is needed, and you may sign yourself with a thumb dipped in the ash at the appropriate moment in the service, or members of a household may sign one another with the words of administration.

Again, please join us on February 17 in an Observance of Ash Wednesday (<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnEpiWestwood>) at 9am or any time thereafter.

Lenten Bible Study Continues...

LENTEN BIBLE STUDY
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 5PM
Zoom Bible Study, (<https://zoom.us/j/95721703863>)

Join your pastors and other church friends for Bible study on Tuesday, February 23 at 5pm via Zoom (<https://zoom.us/j/95721703863>).

We will look at the lectionary readings for Sundays, February 28 (Lent 2) and March 7 (Lent 3).



- **Lent 2, February 28, Mark 8:31-38** – This is Jesus' first prediction of his suffering, death and resurrection. Peter challenges that the way of Jesus will be the way of cross. But continues inviting those who will follow to take up their cross for what does it profit a person to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?
- **Lent 3, March 7, John 2:13-22** – Unlike the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) which gradually build the tension between Jesus and those in authority, John's Gospel leads with the story of the cleansing of the Temple. From the beginning of his ministry, Jesus is objecting to the way those in authority are using or desecrating the Temple.

Prepare for worship by joining us as we converse about these texts for our Lenten worship via Zoom (<https://zoom.us/j/95721703863>). As we have learned no time is right for everyone. If you are able, please join us. If you are interested, and this is not a good time, please let us know (jrichardedens@gmail.com) or (jillredens@gmail.com).

Covid-19 Vaccine Information



Please see the information below from our Faith Community Nurse, Margery Eramo:

"Covid-19 vaccine recipients can expect to have some symptoms, such as mild to moderate local systemic reactions (pain, swelling, redness at the injection site) as well as localized lymph node swelling on the same side as the vaccinated arm. Expect fever, fatigue, headache, chills, muscle aches and joint aches.

These are not allergic reactions. Vaccine recipients should think of these symptoms as signs that the vaccine is working. Most symptoms occur in the first three days after vaccinations. Reactions are more intense after the second dose. Symptoms are also worse in younger as compared with older persons. The good news is that symptoms seem to resolve within 1-3 days."

CVS will begin giving vaccines according to state mandates on Tuesday, February 9th. Please visit www.CVS.com for further information.

Also, for those who have signed up for the Westwood Board of Health vaccination and have not yet heard, BE PATIENT, town is getting 100 doses/week and will contact you when your place on the list comes up. In the meantime, do not hesitate to sign up for other venues if available. If you are in the first cohort for Phase 2 and need help signing up, contact the Senior Center.

Pastoral Search Committee Update



The Local Church Profile, which was assembled over the past several weeks by the Transition Committee, has been posted on the national Ministerial Opportunities web site **[click here](#)**. Additionally, if you look at the posting you will see the link to

the new First Parish – Westwood web site which went live last weekend! (Here is a **[direct link](#)** to the web site.)

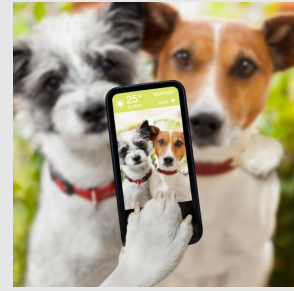
The Search Committee met Monday night to start organizing to receive and review profiles from interested candidates. We look forward to this work and welcome prayers of support from the First Parish community.

Send a Selfie!

During the year, Meg will be working on compiling a "homemade" pictorial directory as a gift for our new settled Pastor.

Pastors Rick and Jill Edens invite you to email Meg a "selfie" of you/your family. Please send all pictures to:
office@firstparishwestwood.org.

Feel free to get creative!



Welcome Videos Requested



We are currently seeking volunteers to do a "Welcome to service at First Parish" video. We encourage you to get creative and have fun.

If you have questions, contact Amie Colcord at amiecolcord@gmail.com. Please submit completed videos to Doug Hyde at dkhydema@gmail.com.

To read our Winter 2021 Spire Newsletter, please [click here](#).

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STAY CONNECTED

